

ANOMALY



IN THIS ISSUE...REED CRANDALL & HARLAN ELLISON

introduction



Science fiction and fantasy have always been the two financial bases of my existence. As a pseudoscientist I now draw them drop from my pocketbook into the hands of various comic book merchants. The dimes become half dollars when I found the world of science fiction paperbacks, and then dollars when I rediscovered comics and began collecting. Now, the dollars have become hundreds of dollars with the advent of fandom and *Anomaly*.

Anomaly is, essentially, an amateur publication. In this sense we are fortunate enough to have professional-does represented by the work of two of my personal favorites—Rand Curdall, artist, and Stefan Eklund, author. We may never be so fortunate again. We have no "fix" with the professional world, and hardly the financial resources to enter professional contribution. We offer only a showcase for raw talent, and copyright protection for those who want it. But sometimes, that can be quite a bit.

We owe the existence of this first issue to one Robert L. Kline. Don and I had been looking around the idea of a fanzine for a couple years and had even managed to accumulate a certain amount of preloved material to fill the publication, thus we happened upon Bob. His art was simply too good to surround it with a lot of crud, so we ditched everything and started anew. As you will see, nearly half of this issue is his material. But he's now in London (as are both Don and I), and we wanted to introduce him with something of a bang. Already he has been asked to contribute to Rachel's *Blitz Comicoletter* and is waiting on a color cover for *Thumpin'*—we'd suggest you keep an eye on him, though at his present rate you'll be lucky to catch a fist blow!

Anomaly straddles several divisions. It is definitely science fiction and sword & sorcery oriented, and yet the graphics of various fancies

are evidently in profusion. Actually, the only fandom not represented seems to be the super hero cult, that look is due simply to the dearth of two quality material from that field, rather than any particular prejudice against them. Oddly, when given free rein, it's surprising how very few authors or artists choose to write fan, or illustrative, superheroes (I tend to blame the huge companies rather than the medium itself for this situation.) However, if super-heroes are your bag and you'd like to contribute, you're very welcome to try—after all, it was a Marvel anomaly for awhile, too.

I'd like to take some time now to explain a little about my own text story heres. It's the first of a series, the basic thread holding the issues together being the situation, rather than any particular character. (Something like Fred Saberhagen's *Demolisher* series.) In other words, anyone can get killed without facing me to end the series when you're slightly sadistic, as I am, this small luxury is precisely essential. I really hate to waste and-of-the-world stories, so I'll probably skip quite a bit of tedious subduing between episodes—but only those issues of *Anomaly* will be able to tell for certain what will transpire.

By the way, the logo illustration on the Goodwin genre is copyrighted (c) by Ron Parker 1957, and is from the July issue of *Hooked!* (number 9, so be exact.) Will have gotten permission to use it, I am, but we couldn't find you. (Now if we can just keep Ron from finding us...)

But enough for now. My tardid comments appear, rather like the phages, in no short supply throughout the issue. And, who knows? You may find a few things of interest in them, too.

—Strand

FAR ACROSS THE ENDLESS VASTNESS OF INTERGALACTIC SPACE THE LONE STARSHIP, "CASTILLON", CARRIES ITS PRECIOUS CARGO: THE MEN AND MACHINES OF THE 23RD EXTRATERRESTRIAL EXPLORATORY AND RECONNAISSANCE TEAM. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STAR DRIVE HAS GIVEN MAN CONTROL OF THE UNIVERSE AND YET HE STILL MAINTAINS HE'S NOT----

HIS BROTHER'S KEEPER



WE JOIN THE CASTILLON IN ORBIT AROUND THE FOURTH PLANET IN THE MIDEUM 12 STAR SYSTEM.



AS PREPARATIONS ARE MADE FOR ENTRY INTO THE ATMOSPHERE, DORM AND MARK SLOAN DON THEIR FLIGHT GEAR PRIOR TO BOARDING ONE OF THE SHIP'S PROBES.



MARK, COMMANDER OF THE PROBE MISSION, HAS CONTINUALLY BEEN THE OBJECT OF HIS BROTHER'S LOATHING.



SINCE ENTERING THE SPACE ACADEMY 17 YEARS BEFORE, DORM HAS HARBORED AN INTENSE HATRED FOR MARK AND HIS CONTINUALLY SUCCESSFUL MILITARY CAREER.



IF ONLY THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED ITSELF, DORM WOULD NOT PASS UP THE CHANCE TO RID HIMSELF OF THIS FRATERNAL HERO.



THANK YOU, CORPORAL.

CHECK OUT LIST'S O.K., SIR!



DORM'S RESENTMENT MOUNTS AS MARK ALLOWS HIM TO PILOT THE CRAFT. CONDESCENSION!

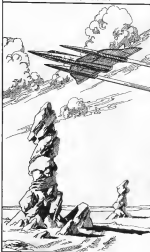


THE ROCKETS IGNITE AND THE PROBE IS FREE OF THE MOTHER SHIP.

THANKS MARK! I HAVEN'T BEEN BEHIND THE WHEEL OF ONE OF THESE BABIES SINCE THE ACCIDENT ON OMA 9.



THE FOURTH PLANET IN THE
MIDEUM TWELVE SYSTEM APPEARS
TO BE NOTHING BUT ROCK AND
SAND WITH LITTLE HOPE FOR
THE SUPPORT OF LIFE.



ROUTINE INVESTIGATION
THIS TRIP, DORM.
PROBABLY WON'T
FIND MUCH.



AFTER ABOUT TWELVE MINUTES
IN THE THIN ATMOSPHERE...



WE'RE JUST ABOUT OVER
OUR FIRST SET OF CO-
ORDINATES, LET'S SET
'HER DOWN, DORM.

AND IN A MOMENT---



BARREN LAND LIES BEFORE THEM.
NOWHERE DOES THERE SEEM TO
BE AN INDICATION OF THE
SMALLEST LIVING ORGANISM.



WHEN SUDDENLY---

MARK,
LOOK!

AS IF BY THE HAND OF A WIZARD,
A STRANGE CITY HAD APPEARED
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT
WASTES.

WE SHOULD HAVE
SEEN IT FROM
THE AIR!

KNOWING THE CITY MUST BE
INVESTIGATED, THE TWO MEN
MOVE TOWARD THE TOWERING
STRUCTURES WITH ALMOST
TRANSELIKE FASCINATION.



BUT THE CITY APPEARS AS DEVOID OF
LIFE AS THE DESERT BEYOND.

IF ANYONE
DOES LIVE
HERE,
THEY'VE
BEEN ON
A MIGHTY
LONG
VACATION.

ALL SEE WHAT'S
DOWN THIS WAY.

DORM HAS WALKED DOWN THE STREET AND TURNS THE CORNER AS MARK ENTERS ONE OF THE BUILDINGS.



SUDDENLY DORM IS STARTLED WHEN A HORRIBLE SCREAM RIPS THE AIR.



DORM RACES TO THE SOURCE OF THE SCREAM AND ---



HE IS STOPPED IN HIS TRACKS BY A SCENE OF GHOSTLY TERROR.



A LOATHSOME ALIEN BEAST HAS APPEARED SEEMINGLY FROM NOWHERE AND CLUTCHES MARK IN ITS HIDEOUS CLAWS.



INSTINCTIVELY, DORM RAISES
AND AIMS HIS RIFLE, BUT ----



FINALLY FINDING HIS CHANCE TO
GET RID OF MARK, DORM RUNS
FOR THE PROBE LEAVING HIS
BROTHER TO THE CREATURE'S
JAWS.



NO MARK,
YOU'LL JUST HAVE
TO WORK THIS
ONE OUT ALONE!



THE FOOL!
I KNEW IT WAS ONLY A
MATTER OF TIME UNTIL HE
GOT HIS HEAD IN A NOOSE,
AND ALL I'D HAVE TO DO
WAS WATCH!



HA-HA-HA-HA,
NEVER HAD A
CHANCE!
HA-HA-HA-HA-



HMM--WONDER
WHERE THAT THING
CAME FROM. WELL,
SHOULDN'T LOOK A
GIFT HORSE IN
THE MOUTH, I GUESS.



ONCE AGAIN ABOARD THE PROBE, DORM PREPARES TO SWITCH ON THE ENGINES...

BETTER GET OUTA HERE. DON'T KNOW HOW MANY MORE OF THOSE NIGHTMARES ARE AROUND.



WHEN HE SEES THAT HE IS RAPIDLY BEING ENGULFED IN A FOUL SMELLING LIQUID,

WHAT THE...



QUICKLY HIS FLIGHT SUIT BEGINS DISINTEGRATING, AND HIS FLESH STARTS TO DETERIORATE.

MY GOD!!



AS DORM IS DIGESTED ALIVE, HE REALIZES HOW THE STAR CREATURE APPEARED SO SUDDENLY. YOU SEE IT WAS ONCE AN ANCIENT BUILDING, JUST AS THE ONE DORM IS IN BECAME AN EXACT COPY OF THE CASTILLON'S PROBE.

CHAMELEONS, IT SEEMS, NEED NOT CHANGE ONLY THEIR COLOR!!



THE VOICE IN THE GARDEN

by Harlan Ellison

After the bomb, the last man on Earth wandered through the rubble of Cleveland, Ohio. It had never been a particularly jaunty town, nor even remotely appealing to esthetes. But now, like Detroit and Rangoon and Minsk and Yokohama, it had been reduced to a petulantly shattered tinkertoy of lathe and brickwork, twisted steel girders and melted glass.

As he picked his way around the dust heaps that had been the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on what had been Public Square, his eyes red-rimmed from crying at the loss of mankind, he saw something he had not seen in Beirut or Venice or London. He saw the movement of another human being.

Celestial choruses sang in his head as he broke into a run across the pitted and blasted remnants of Euclid Avenue. It was a woman!

She saw him, and in the very posture of her body, he knew she was filled with the same glory he felt. She knew! She began running toward him, her arms outstretched. They seemed to swim toward one another in a ballet of slow motion. He stumbled once, but got to his feet quickly and went on. They detoured around the crumpled tin of tortured metal that had once been automobiles, and met in front of the shattered carcass that was, in a time seemingly eons before, The May Co.

"I'm the last man!" he blurted. He could not keep the words inside, they frothed to emerge. "I'm the last, the very last. They're all dead, everyone but us. I'm the last man, and you're the last woman, and we'll have to mate and start the race again, and this time we'll do it right. No war, no hate, no bigotry, nothing but goodness. . . we'll do it, you'll see, it'll be fine, a bright new shining world from all this death and terror."

Her face lighted with an ethereal beauty, even beneath the soot and deprivation. "Yes, yes," she said. "It'll be just like that. I love you, because we're all there is left to love, one another."

He touched her hand. "I love you. What is your name?"

She flushed slightly. "Eve," she said. "What's yours?"

"George," he said.

E.C. didn't live long enough for Andue to be employed by them as a cartoonist or writer: at the time Andue was in college, E.C. was dying. From Oklahoma Mr. Goodwin moved to New York and the School of Visual Arts. It was here that Andue met Al Williamson, Angela Davis, and many other people soon to be connected with the E.C. staff: it was at the School of Visual Arts that Goodwin developed his very strong design conscious cartoon work.

Rather than stretch into a history that has been re-wrapped many times recently, and come up with simply another informative article on Goodson, we interviewed him. The following conversation touches slightly upon Archie's career and work, more specifically with his recent involvement with Warren Publications.

The following three illustrations consist of the rough pencil conceptions Archie conceived before writing a story for "Thermopylae" and "The Square!", along with a finished cartoon for *FREDDY WORLD*.

I wanted to start by asking you if you did any professional work at all around the time you were submitting material to MOONAH and attending Oklahoma University.

Oh no, none at all.

Then your first story was the one that just turned up recently in the HARVEY magazine that Reed Crandall and Al Williamson illustrated ("Admiral Taker").

Yes, that was the first story I think they've requested that several times.

That was submitted at what date?

I would say in '57 or '58.

What comic oriented work were you doing before you were seen the service?

* The only thing I could say was some oriented is the work I was doing with Leonard Starr on the comic strip *ON STAGS*, helping him with the writing on that.

Then you were with REDBOOK for awhile? (layout and design work in the art department)?

Well, actually, I was working with REDBOOK before I went into the Army, and I was writing the comic strip freelance. I worked for REDBOOK a year or two before I went into the Army and I think I was there for about two or three years after I got out. I was in the Army for two years.

What year was it you got out?

I believe it was '62.

Around 1963-65 where were you, and what were you doing with the majority of your writing?

Around that time I must have been working at REDBOOK, in an aspect of writing about the only thing I did was I sold a short story to *SLIPPER QUEEN MYSTERY MAGAZINE*. And then sometime toward the end of that period I started in writing for Warren. I was still working for REDBOOK when I started working for Warren. I never really got into it through Al Williamson and through the editor Russ Jones.

So you were writing on a free-lance basis and then ended up taking the editorship over when Russ Jones left, right?

Right.

Did you have any changes that you wanted to see executed right away or any specific ideas you were going to forward once you got the editorship?

I think due to a certain amount of mismanagement on Russ's part there were things hanging over, I mostly wanted to concentrate on dispelling those, and for awhile just sort of get things operating on a smooth basis—which I don't think I ever succeeded in doing.

I know that both Reed Crandall and Al Williamson have mentioned that they enjoyed very much illustrating stories that you wrote. I also have quite a few of these preliminary pencil sketches that you did, and Al told me that these things were conceived usually before you were writing the story—was it true?

Right. That's generally the way I try to work, except in *MAKFISS*. I haven't been able to do it too much, I'm trying to work into it now.

I guess it's similar to what Elmer did for quite awhile.

Except it's quite a number of notches below anything that Elmer did. It may be a similar approach. When I got the idea of doing it, I'd always heard that Kurtzman did layouts for all his stories, though as I understood it, Kurtzman did full original art size layouts and simply told the artists following them. I mostly offer it to the artist as sort of a visualization of what I had in mind, and for them either to repeat it, whichever they think's best.

When the panel arrangement in CREEPY and EERIE began to change, and they had all those angles and splashes and overlap and all—was that your idea or part some of the artist's?

Since I had a number of friends who were artists, even before I became editor of CREEPY I'd heard them complain about the various troubles they'd had with editors on things like that, and I decided to give them at first as much as possible. I was also a master of inducing people to do things for the magazine when it wasn't quite as monetarily profitable for them to do it.

So in other words that was usually their own idea.

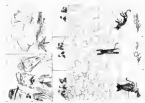
I think Alvin Tuth really started it when he did the story called "The Stalkers", and then a few other artists started picking it up. My general feeling was Tuth really knew what he was doing when he did it, and I think a lot of times people picked it up and did it just to do something different, rather than with a specific purpose. I always felt it was one of my weaknesses that I didn't do more toward making it once it got started. I kept thinking they'd get it out of their systems.

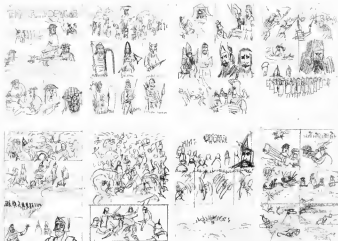
*How did Craig's story ("The Defense Rats", *EERIE* #7) that he illustrated start in the same way the E.C. photo-fiction were conceived come off? Was this accepted well?*

Yes, generally it didn't get any adverse reactions. I told Johnny that I really preferred stories with balloons and all, but I would see what kind of reaction it got.

When you left Warren, was it your own decision to do so? Were you tired with it?

THE SOLJAW!





I felt I was beginning to get a little written out on that type of story, and Warren was beginning to have a lot of financial problems. I found myself in the position of having to give out jobs to people and not being sure when they would be paid. There was really no friction between Warren and I.

Regrettably now, I think, no matter how appealing they make it visually, they'll never have the quality in their written content because they're, say, giving *Frankie* the liberty to point out any kind of painting he wants, and then they're just hiding some back or somebody out of nowhere to illustrate a story.

Again I think their problems are largely financial.

I wanted to ask you about this cartoon we have—when did you do this?

That I did before I went into the Army. There was a magazine called *FISHING WORLD* that a friend of mine was art director on. They wanted to have a page cartoon series in it, for almost a year I did a page a month for them. The only limitation was that it had to pertain to fishing, which I know nothing about. So it got to be more and more of a strain to think up fishing gags.

WITZEND #1 contained this story: "Dinner" that you wrote and drew yourself. What was the date on this work?

I really even forgot when I started it; I think I probably started it

sometime maybe in '58. And I think I averaged about a page a year on that.

Your work for *MARVEL* now—what exactly does that involve?

I'm doing *IRON MAN* every month.

Do you have any contact with the artists, and are you continuing your storyboard preliminaries?

For a long time I didn't. The way *MARVEL* works is, the author sends a story synopsis to the artist and the artist breaks it down into panel form; the last two years, though, I've done the storyboard for the covers and stories.

What do you have planned for the next year or so? Any particular different directions you'd like to take?

Not really anything unusual. I've been assigned to do some comic books featuring Mr. Clean, the fellow on the household cleanser, and I guess that's about it.

—Ardie Goodman

17 August 1969
New York City







THANKS

THIS FIRST ISSUE GO TO:

Reed Crandall, Harlan Ellison, and Archie Goodwin,
our pros this issue;

Jerry Weist, publisher of *Squa Doss* (the 2004 of the
fanzine world), for aid above and beyond the Goodwin
interview;

Roger Bell, for loaning us the Goodwin cartoon;

Terry Carr, who first printed "The Voice in the Garden"
in his magazine *Lighthouse* back in August, 1967;

Steve Hickman and Lance DeLipki for their illustra-
tions this issue, and who will receive their free copies as
soon as we find their addresses;

And to Bob Kline, whom I am buttoning up by thanking
him again for his unequalled assistance in this venture.



prevues

Undoubtedly the most difficult part of getting out a fanzine is convincing people to contribute to a first issue. In our case, Reed Cundall and Martin Wilson were willing to take the chance. Jerry West put in a few good words for us and helped us gather material. Greg Phillips decided to plunge right in, and Robert Klara mysteriously appeared to save our hides with a few swags of his evocative pen and brush. We are grateful one and all, fellows, more than I could ever articulate. And now? Now we've got our first issue; now you know what we're up to, and now we're going away again right and left in hopes of attracting a few more contributors. What the future holds for us is beyond the ken of we poor mortals, but we have been offered a few kind glimpses of what you can expect from future issues of *Anomaly*. I'll be privileged to share those glimpses with you.



GERALD KENNEL

Don Ben, who has been everything from publisher to assistant editor to offical sump-ticker of the staff, has been working in his copious spare moments, as a couple of extremely promising writers recently discovered from notes during back to the Hykman Age. When last seen, Don (in his role as correspondence editor) was being eaten alive by 2000 Front Street newspaper trained for moonlighting by his outraged correspondents, so it's really hard to tell precisely when his masterworks will see the light of day, well, I have faith in the old boy, and am confident that he will eventually emerge, manuscripts in hand.

Kenneth Smith, the most learned new artist of our day, has produced more of his inimitable fine line artwork in the 4-6 year for future issues. Ken's work is illustrated at its finest (so his p. can tell us, anyway), to stick around.

I'm becoming more and more impressed with some of the fan fiction I'm receiving—we'll be presenting some of the best in the near future. Science fiction, sword & sorcery, and one story I still haven't classified!

Survivors of the *Sanctuary* brawl will be continuing for a few more issues, so rather than every derogatory letter we get. After all, an editor/publisher has a few privileges, and it's either *Sanctuary* or a poetry page (and I'd hate to do that to anybody!).

Also, next issue will feature a brand new ads strip by Bob Klara, complete with advertisement, comments, two answers, and various sacred secret criticisms beyond descriptions. It'll appear if I have to back my Bad Reader's Club ring and print the story by itself, so I swear.

Plus, more pages for your delect. which means simply a lot more *Anomaly*!

**SURVIVORS
of the Suicide World**

Episode One: The Homecoming

by J. S. Strnad Illustrated by Phillips

They stood, unmoving, their gaze locked onto the barren desert stretching out before their eyes like a heathen god of death. The god slept, confident in his unchallenged dominion over all, for there were none left to challenge him. No shouts sounded in the whistling wind as the god sighed contentedly over devastated houses and offices. No animal stirred the dust, for animal and dust were the same. No motor turned, or was capable of turning, for the age of the machine was ended. It was the age of death, of decaying and returning to ashes, of slowly preparing the Earth for a new beginning. It was time to weed out the few remnants of mankind, and to clear the way for another god's experiment, if any god were willing to try.

Captain Phillips squinted from the light and heat of the desert sun. The stark desolation of what had once been Richmond, Virginia, drained him of all emotion; he felt bitterly empty and numb. He had seen death before, and he had seen the skeletal remains of cities besieged by man and nature both; but not so much as a skeleton now presented itself, for the skeleton too had been strangled by man's unquenchable thirst for destruction.

The captain searched for words to comfort his men, something to say that would reassure them, bury their hopes, and preserve their sanity; but the silence of death drowned his thoughts just as it would drown his words. What do you say to a man who has lost everything? How do you tell him not to worry, that everything will be all right, it just takes a little time; how do you tell him and avoid sounding like some hare-brained Pollyanna? You don't, because you can't speak of life in the realm of death. He slowly became aware of a voice beside him.

"Captain, did you hear me? I said this area's too hot—radiation from the bombs—we've got to move on."

"Humm? Oh, yes. Of course." Radiation...bombs...war—who would be so foolish as to start another war in modern times? Didn't they know it was impossible for anyone to emerge as victor when all sides possessed enough power to incinerate the entire planet several times over? How could they hope to expand their empire after they had laid waste to a world?

The captain kicked at the radioactive dust and scanned the horizon once more, then turned and began the trek back to the spaceship that had saved the lives of himself and his crewmen.

Unable to keep his thoughts to himself, he addressed them to the young man walking beside him.

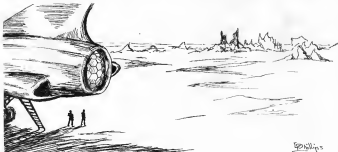
"You know, Sayre, Man has claimed for centuries to be the highest order of animal, simply because he can reason, and yet even the most elementary reasoning process would have told him that a war of this magnitude would relinquish no one, winner or loser, to claim his spoils. And so the Earth is barren now, open to anyone, like ourselves, who can come along and pick the marrow from its bones. And that is what Man's reason has accomplished."

Sayre looked at the man who had infected the Earth, such as it was. The face was tired, old and wrinkled beyond its years. The mouth, half-hidden by the captain's moustache, was emotionless, but the eyes looked worried and spent, as though they were tired of seeing and longed only to rest. The pressure had been on Captain Phillips for 18 months as the spaceship 'Vauverot' winged its way to Alpha Centauri and back, and every decision had left an indelible signature on the captain's face.

"You're an old, old man, Captain Phillips, Sayre thought. At forty, you're an old, old man, and maybe a little senile."

"And what about that, Captain?" replied Sayre, pointing to the gleaming silver hull of the 'Vauverot'. "Isn't that an accomplishment worthy of the Captain's note?"

"That, Sayre, is our tool. Our one remaining tool to help us rebuild mankind, if such a feat is humanly



possible." Captain Phillips fastened his eyes on Sayre. "And we've got to use it wisely, for the good of whatever tatters of the human race we can find—not to further our own immediate grasping for power."

"But of course, Captain—philanthropy is the American way. But so are competition and survival of the fittest."

"I don't give a damn about 'the American way,' Sayre.

America's gone now, destroyed right along with the rest. This isn't Virginia soil beneath our feet and those shattered buildings back there aren't Richmond—they used to be, a few months ago, but they aren't any longer. Now this is just another stretch of desert. What we have belongs to the rest of the world; it has to if mankind is going to live and to grow. There is one race, Sayre, and one race only, and that's the race of survivors."

"Of course, Captain."

The two men entered the ship in silence. Once inside, the captain studied the faces around him; he noted fear in some and anger in a few, but primarily discerned only apathy and resigned acceptance of a situation too startlingly unheard-of to admit emotion. Hysteria and other emotional breakdown would occur later, but not quite yet. Not until the full realization of the totality of mankind's genocide became inescapably apparent.

He proceeded to the ship's conference room where the results of preliminary research awaited him. No eyes lifted when he entered the room, and he abandoned all pre-meeting protocol—society's conventions had died with society.

Slowly he lowered himself into the nearest chair, closed his eyes, and sighed heavily. The men were silent for several seconds, as if in prayer, before the captain spoke.

"Well, gentlemen, what do you have to report?"

The one nearest the captain began. "From the historical point of view, Captain, I'd say the desolation we have returned to was caused by nuclear warfare of a rather limited magnitude. As you know, had all sides unleashed their total weaponry, we wouldn't have had a planet left at all. Furthermore, judging from the decreasing radiation level, though high-megaton bombs were evidently used, few or none of their utilized isotopes of extraordinarily long half-life—an encouraging note for the future.

"And what about the present—how many survivors?"

Another man took up the second topic. "That's impossible to tell, Captain. You see, not only were nuclear bombs used, but biological ones as well. Their effects, especially when viewed in context with nuclear weaponry, are impossible to predict. I can't tell you how many people could have survived; nor can I say what effects nuclear-biological warfare has had on those who did survive. I can only advise you to expect anything."

"How heavy was destruction to the cities?"

A third man. "Richmond, which you have seen, is probably representative of a heavily-hit area. It's doubtful that any area was left unscathed, but most rural and smaller metropolitan areas are probably in considerably better condition than this one. There's the possibility of survivors in some of these areas. Particularly, there's hope for parts of Africa and Australia, and for scattered communities in the United States."

The first man spoke again. "As you recall, sir, the United States had a certain measure of defensive force, including an experimental antiradiation screen of uncertain efficiency. Therefore, although it was a major power and undoubtedly a prime target, hope for survivors does exist."

"And if survivors do exist, how long can they live once their immediate stores of food are gone?" The captain leaned forward slightly. "And I'm talking about ourselves, gentlemen." His gaze swept along the row of men, and he felt a vague uneasiness about them, more than could be attributed to such an expectable question. They were holding something back, something they didn't want to admit quite yet; they had the air of schoolchildren asked to tell on a classmate. And he himself felt that something was wrong, something was missing...

"Crewman Gernard was in charge of this area of the investigation, was he not? Where is he? Why isn't he here?" A long pause followed the captain's question, until the first man answered.

"Gernard has left. The search party discovered his radio and a brief message to the effect that he was going after someone; I believe he said her name was Christy. He asked us not to tell you for fear that you'd try to stop him."

"Is that all you know? Did he say where he was headed?"

"That's all we know, sir."

The captain stared hard at the table for several seconds, then he massed his head and spoke in a slow monotone. "Any man is free to leave the ship whenever he wishes. Crewman Gernard is doing what he feels he must do, and no man can condemn him for that. I can only wish him the best of fortune."

Another few seconds of silent thought, and he added, "In view of the rest of your findings, I believe we have no choice but to list him as...missing: presumed dead." That will be all for now, gentlemen."

Robert Gernard stared at the man seated beside him in the old 1972 Buick. The man was older than he, about fifty, and was filthy. His hair clung together in matted clumps with dirt and oil; his teeth were yellowed and decayed and some were missing, his fat hands were grubby, as was his every inch of exposed skin, his clothes were ripped and stained with dirt, grease, and blood, and he stank.

A man so dirty could never be cleaned, only buried, thought Gernard.

"I *must* have been out of my mind to think I could hike all the way to Fredericksburg in this heat," he said. "If you hadn't spotted me and offered a lift, I'd probably be lying face down back there in the sand, sure pony to anything that came along."

"Desert's the safest place to be, sometimes." The remark was in keeping with the man's previous, cynical statements. What few words he had said had all been despairing, full of regret, and tinged with a sharp anger. Gernard had no liking for him, and planned on ending the

forced friendship as soon as possible. "I been to Fredricksburg before, and, believe me, there's no place I'd rather avoid than it and cities like it. If it weren't for the food, I'd never go back."

"Oh? How come?"

"Them—the people who lived there and survived. And the dogs. 'Course, beat away like you have, maybe you don't know."

"We only landed today. I haven't had time to learn much of anything." Garmond had told him all the details, how he and the 'Vasquez' crew had survived, and he was annoyed by the man's attitude—as if Garmond were someone to be looked down upon for having escaped the holocaust, and thus returning unscathed.

"Yeah. Well, the people that weren't wiped out, they began to change. I don't know why, and I never heard of anything like it before, but they started growin' fangs, you know, like a snake. And that's not all—their minds went, too. They're just animals now. Two-legged animals that look almost like men."

"What about the dogs?"

"Same thing, only they're worse almost than the people. They run around in packs, bratin' packs. The people, they stay pretty much to themselves, and the light hurts their eyes so they're practically blind out in the sunlight. But the dogs—they're always out. They stick pretty much to the city because of the people, though. They feed on 'em, and on us too if they find us."

The man glanced over at Garmond, and noticed his fat tightly stretched over the Buick's armrest. His eyes stared straight ahead and his brow was furrowed—he looked as though he were trying to obliterate some distant object through mere mental force.



"Sorry, but that's the way it is," the man said. "You got friends in town?"

It was some time before Garmond answered. When he did, his voice was slow and reluctant.

"Yes. Christy's in Fredricksburg."

The man shook his head. "No room for hope. If she's not dead, she's one of them. It's one or the other."

The remainder of the trip was spent with no words exchanged between the two men. As Fredricksburg came into view Garmond's hopes rose. A large proportion of buildings remained more-or-less intact, though rubble blocked the car's path and forced them to proceed on foot. Empty supermarket shelves proved the existence of survivors, but the streets were deathly quiet, as if the city were observing the new arrivals and waiting for them to act.



The man pointed to a typical grocery store window—the glass was shattered, some fragments hanging loosely in the frame. Inside, the store was devoid of most non-perishable foods.

"Last time I was here I filled the car easy. The things that live here haven't got enough brains to open a can of soup; others must pass through the town, or maybe there's people alive nearby, outside the city, who come here to get food. Then—the ones that were here when the bombs dropped—they live off rats, insects, anything that's alive, including voices."

As they entered building after building in search of food, the man related some of the horrors he had witnessed or heard about from passing strangers. Survivors that had considered themselves safe had suddenly found their peaceful community transformed into a seething metropolis of the damned with every setting of the sun. Families prayed for a merciful god to save them from the scraping, rasping sounds of unearthly scratchings outside their locked, hastily barricaded doors, then watched in helpless terror at the sight of their makeshift fortifications giving way to a flood of helpsworn demons bearing only the slightest external resemblance to the humans they had once been. The man had watched in silence as living beings were devoured, still screaming, by the deranged hoard, and as devil battled devil with the arrival of the hounds.

"It was like a nightmare," he said. "I swore I was going to be sick, and that, if I got out of it alive, I'd never return. But here I am. A man does strange things, sometimes, just to survive."

As bear passed. The man snatched the supermarkets, occasionally picking up a can of fruit or a package of dried food that had been overlooked by the others, but never discovering any great stores of supplies. Rotten fruit, vegetables, and meat were in profusion, perishable food being of little use to anyone, including Garmad and his companion. Eventually, they entered an apartment house that had been spared, for the most part, the direct explosive damage of the bombs. A search of many of the rooms uncovered relatively large amounts of non-perishables, too much for the men to carry on their backs.



"We'll have to get the car here somehow," the man said. "I think that by circling the town, we can come in from the west, and maybe we can make it that way."

The sky was beginning to darken when they left the apartment house, and the shadows were growing in size and number. The man was tired and stumbled often, until he finally threw himself down by the side of a damaged but still standing building, Garmad joining him in silence. Then the man spoke.

"They've been watching us, you know, from the shadows. I could feel their eyes observing our every step. They're waitin' for us to grow weak from hunger, or to collapse from weariness, or to walk stupidly into one of their ambushes. And it's only a matter of time until we do."

Garmad looked sharply up and across the street. Something ducked quickly out of sight, one second too late to avoid Garmad's glance. Yes, he'd seen them. A shadow

that moved, a dark doorway with eyes, he'd seen them. But he didn't want to admit it even to himself.

A sudden wild cacophony of sound shattered his reverie. A chaotic mixture of mad, unresolved notes from impossible musical instruments, like the sound of a dozen ticks squealing on hot pavement, pierced the calm and the darkness and caused both men to leap simultaneously to their feet. The pitch and volume of the sound rose with every passing moment as the howling of dogs broke through the atmosphere and heralded the coming of the man-made demons. The man pointed to the fire escape directly above him. "Quick—up here."

Garmad helped the man up, then followed immediately behind. They entered the building through a third floor window and watched the street cautiously from there.

Six, right, twelve dogs erupted around the corner, slaver running in streams from cruel mouths, serpentine fangs glowing white amongst sawtooth teeth, red eyes glaring from skull-like faces. Matted fur succeeded in covering scarred bodies; some wounds still oozed fresh blood. General agitation replaced the pack's forward motion as the dogs caught the scent of meat. They quivered with excitement, collided, crouched and kept in an insane anticipation of food, and then, like one many-headed devil, sprang into the shadows not ten feet from Garmad's previous resting place. A wild howl sounded from a dozen savage pellets and a not-quite-human scream tore the air. The dogs flowed back into the street dragging the conclusive remnants of a living being and fought each other for scraps of meat clinging to the bones. Blood flowed onto the pavement and ran in rivulets along the curb. The dogs tracked it, splattered it on their bodies in their greedy howling over pieces of skin ripped violently from the corpse of the inhuman being that was their kill. And always their howling thrust itself into Garmad's brain like a curving, twisted blade of cold steel that caused his entire body to shiver uncontrollably. Finally, the killing and feasting over, they bolted off in search of further prey. And then they were gone; all but one—

one that waited, sniffing the ground and looking from side to side. One that paced the area in random circles, nervously, excitedly. One that had caught a different scent, a familiar scent. One that Bob Garmad had not singled out in the wild melee of the pack's assault, but whose identity now became excruciatingly apparent.

He straightened from his crouch by the window and stepped onto the fire escape as the dog raised its fowered eyes upward. Garmad stood there, unmoving, studying the wretched creature below him, which was, in turn, studying him. Garmad saw the hang, still wet with blood, and the many cuts and welts the dog had received during the past few months. One eye was swollen shut and a sizable chunk had been removed from one ear. Flies wormed numerous sores on the dog's body, and the bald, broken tail hung at an ungainly angle. The entire body was destitute thin, but the legs, weakened by near-starvation, still trembled under its weight. The dog had existed within an angstrom of death for weeks, but it still lived, barely, and it was here, and it recognized Garmad.

Garmad's mouth was suddenly drier than it had been all day. He gazed at the mad beast that had once given

him a warm, honest companionship like no human was capable of giving, and he gazed for words; soft-sounding words that had once meant scratching behind the ears and booms of growling on countless quiet afternoons, or words that would express his pain and sorrow for not being there, for the first time, not being there when he was needed. He searched for the words he used to say, but found them useless, outdated words of the past, out of place in this terrifying new world of fear. Garmad's voice wept when he spoke, wept with all the hurt and torment they both had endured, and all he could say was,

"Christy."

And it was enough. The dog's muzzled tail began to wag.

Garmad dropped from the fire escape and walked slowly towards her. The man was yelling something, but Garmad chose not to hear. Another sound was growing in the distance, but this, too, went unheeded. Christy trotted up beside him and there, on shattered pavement in the middle of a razed town, two warwork representations of sanity were reunited in a world gone mad with hate.

He stroked the coarse fur as though it were fine silk, and scratched under her chin, carefully avoiding the open cuts he found there. Christy's tongue rose over the blood-stained teeth, between the glistering newly-formed fangs, and gently licked his face and hands. The searching and the weeping were over.

In the distance the howling grew louder and higher as the dogs approached.

Garmad looked up and saw the returning pack of hounds advancing swiftly up the street. He glanced at the fire escape and, seeing no one, knew the man had retreated to safety within the building. But for Garmad there was no escape; he had been seen, and the pack would not surrender such an easy victim.

They were busy, indistinct shadows in the deepening twilight, and to Garmad's view they appeared as one nothing, pulsating mass of frenzy. They bore down relentlessly, as though sent by the Devil from the deepest caverns of Hell itself.

Panic seized him in a thousand-fingered, icy grip along the spine. A sudden vision of carnage with himself as the kill came to his eyes, and he could almost feel their teeth ripping at his flesh. He looked back at Christy, and his look was a desperate plea for salvation; if he could be saved, she had to work the miracle. Garmad screamed at the sight of the saliva steaming freely from her mouth, and at the wild glint in her eyes. The months of running with the pack had taken their effect. She was shaking with the turmoil inside her; her mind was baffled with the conflict that strove to bar her spirit with each side's insistent demands, neither of which would be reconciled with the other. Survival and the contagious excitement of the mob battled the hometown peace that was Garmad, and she was confused, overcome with the vacillation between her reason and her instincts. Garmad could afford to take no chance—the dogs were too near, and Christy could do nothing to help. But there was one way left open to him, and he would take it, in his desperation, though he had refused to even consider it a few seconds before. One way that might win him the precious moments he needed.

He jumped to his feet and dashed inside the building, the dogs following madly behind. He heard their snarling and the sound of claws on ancient linoleum as they pursued him up two flights of stairs. He grabbed the wall as he emerged on the third floor and spun around the corner, gaining slightly as the dogs slipped on the smooth surface beneath them. His mind made rapid calculations as he ran frantically down the narrow corridor, then passed briefly before a cracked, wooden door. He threw his weight fully against it, felt it give way, and he fell to the floor amidst shards of wood. Basing himself painfully on one elbow, he shoved himself over against the wall next to the doorway as the pack's momentum carried them on into the center of the room, the room Garmad had figured must contain his former ally.



The man cried out, pressing his back against the wall as the dogs saw him and attacked. He twisted his body to escape their fangs as they tore at his clothing in search of the human meat they craved and needed. He slid down the wall, securing a final position beneath their fierce onslaught, and was lost to Garmad's sight under their bodies. And there, in the center of the vicious multitude, Garmad could barely discern Christy.

"A man does strange things, sometimes, just to survive."

The man's words filled Garmad's mind as he took advantage of the few minutes' headstart his traitorship had gained, and he began to run.



THE ENCHANTED SWORD
by J.S. Stroud and Don Blum

James walked slowly around the still beast that lay dead before him. His ancient sword hung limply in his hands and dripped hot monster-blood on the mountain earth. The slum creature jerked spasmodically, causing James to drop his sword with a cry before he realized the dragon's action was totally involuntary and not the work of a still-living beast. He regained his weapon and faced the young boy approaching him.

"It has been some time since my sword was red with anything but rust," he explained. "I've not had much opportunity to slay dragons."

The lad's dark brown eyes were peering over at such an early age, and were a little too discerning for James' comfort.

"It appears to me," said the youth, "that had the clumsy beast not stumbled over a loose boulder, and thus fallen straight into your swordpoint, the ground would be wet with another's blood — namely your own."

"Heh!?" James started, knowing the boy was correct but dreading if he'd admit it. "Let's probe the creature's cave and determine if it is indeed the one we seek — the one housing the enchanted sword of Ren."

"Do you wish me to lead?" asked the boy as he panned the wilderness.

James grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him back. "Certainly not. I shall lead! *Experienced* youngster!" he thought. *Do you wish me to lead? Of all the foolishness! Though the thought seems entirely a foreign one. . . But he had never seriously considered it, of course. Inside, the cave was as all caves are — dark and full of hostile projections from floor and ceiling.*

"If I weren't the intelligent, well-schooled fellow I am, I

would swear that every hanging and protruding object herein were consciously trying to irritate me or place itself in my path," he stated.

The boy, who had somehow miraculously avoided all obstacles, unharmed. "Perhaps they will be less troublesome once we reach yonder light."

James lifted his eyes from the floor long enough to notice for the first time a shimmering light at the far end of the cave.

"It must be the enchanted sword!" he exclaimed. He broke into stumbling flight toward the glowing object. Naturally, taking a slightly more cautious course, the boy reached the treasure some time before him. James shouted ahead as the lad reached for the prize. "Lay a hand on that sword and I'll drive you in two!"

The boy shrugged and contented himself with reading the old inscriptions on the scabbard across the sword. Eventually, James caught up.

"At last! It's mine! The enchanted sword of Ren, renowned for transforming its owner into the mightiest of warriors, merely by right of possession! And now I am its owner! I shall be unconquerable!"

James withdrew the sword from its scabbard and hefted it, finding it grow lighter with each passing second as his muscles grew larger and more powerful. He swung it through the air and neatly sliced a foot-thick chunk from a nearby stalactite.

"It's true! I am the mightiest of warriors!" exclaimed James, and he turned and led the way back out of the cave.

"Oh mighty warrior," said the youth stepping quickly from behind, "might I not be so honored as to carry the scabbard of one so noble? At least so far as the bottom of the mountain?

Surely you cannot fear that I would dare steal from one as *unwieldy*! And such a task would give me great status among my fellows. Will you not grant me this boon?"

James thought for a second before he relinquished the scabbard, and then consented. "Very well, young one, I grant you that favor. And furthermore, I will even give to you as a gift my old sword — it served me well enough, though hardly as expertly as my new possession will!"

The boy grabbed the old sword and slid it smoothly into the scabbard, then dashed swiftly down the mountain. "I shall meet you at the tavern, Oh Noble James!" he cried over his shoulder.

James laughed at the boy's apparent eagerness over being so close to one as mighty as he, and hurried easily down the mountain side.

The minutes were into an hour, and the enchanted sword grew heavy in James' hand. He held it up to the late afternoon sunlight.

Odd, he thought. *The bright glow seems to be fading. And the red on the blade . . . must have picked up some of the dragon's blood from my clothes.* He held it closer and examined the red spots that seemed to be appearing before his eyes. *Real?* He gripped the sword's handle firmly in both hands and swung at a six-inch tree trunk. The sword hit the tree with a shock that made him cry in pain, and that blew clouds of red dust from the weatherworn iron. *The boy! He was responsible for this! Somehow, this was his doing!*

He ran headlong down the mountain, and into the town below. *The tavern!*

His hand reached for his aging weapon as he threw open the tavern door and flew inside. All eyes met his, and he greeted them with a snarl.

"Where's the boy?"

The tavern keeper stepped forward and replied. "Boy? What boy? No young ones are let in here — you know that!"

James showed the old man to one side. "He's in here! He's got to be!"

The tavern keeper signaled and four men sprang from their seats; they were stopped by a strangely thwarted giant of a young man who held them back with one arm. "Hold. Perhaps I am the one this weakening sucks."

James looked up at the young warrior's face.

"No, impossible! The one I am looking for is small, and years younger than you! Where is he?"

The giant grunted. "It is fitting that you hunt one who is your inferior — you who repose upon a dragon's strength that you may claim heroism."

James met the young man's piercing brown eyes. "Oh no! You are . . ."

"Yes, you are, according to the inscription on the scabbard — which, by the way, you were too busy prying yourself to read — any sword may become enchanted. As long as it was the last one to enter the enchanted scabbard!" He withdrew James' now-shining gift from its holder and held it under the would-be hero's chin. "And now, I would advise you to vacate this town with all possible haste — unless you would care to match blades!"

And so, not wishing to take advantage of one so young and inexperienced in the ways of warfare, noble James strode swiftly out of town.

Robert E. Howard— *-illustrated!*

1. The Black Stone
2. The Hand of Nergal (Baken of Akuf)
3. Valley of the Worm

by

ROBERT L. KLINE









a few final thoughts

Money, and how to part with it

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and an important announcement

As if one *Anomaly* wasn't enough to contend with, another equally separate and distinct publication, also titled *Anomaly*, has recently come into being. It's an excellent magazine devoted to serious examination and evaluation of the UFO phenomena, and it's obtainable by writing to John A. Keel, Box 353, Marcy Hill Station, New York, N.Y. 10066. Thanks go to Ken Messer for bringing this fact to our attention, and to Mr. Keel for his understanding help in straightening things out.

